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C O N F I D E N T I A L FRANKFURT 005998

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [GM](#) [CH](#) [XD](#)

SUBJECT: DALAI LAMA VISITS GERMANY

Classified By: Consul General Peter Bodde for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Dalai Lama paid a three-day visit to Frankfurt and Wiesbaden to receive one of Germany's most prestigious awards (the Hesse Peace Prize). Hesse Minister-President Roland Koch (CDU/Christian Democrat) drew praise from across the political spectrum for his endorsement of the Tibetan cause as a human rights issue. The Dalai Lama reiterated his commitment to non-violent engagement and privately expressed frustration in dealing with Nepalese authorities. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) In the televised award ceremony, Minister-President Koch praised the Dalai Lama's long-standing commitment to non-violence in resisting China's violations of Tibetans' human and cultural rights. No one questions China's territorial integrity, Koch emphasized, but human rights apply universally. He portrayed the Tibetan reality as one filled with injustices including many stemming from China's policy to marginalize Tibetans through the settlement of Han-Chinese in Tibet. These policies undermine religious freedom and the preservation of Tibetan culture and language, Koch said. Speaking out in Tibet "means prison, rape, deportation, and death." Koch thanked the government of India for hosting the Dalai Lama and pointedly asked "... where are the Panchen Lama (and) the many monks and others who spoke out for Tibetans and whose whereabouts are unknown?"

13. (U) In his acceptance speech, the Dalai Lama asked for continued support for religious freedom and cultural preservation in Tibet. In a press interview, the Dalai Lama called for engagement with China but indirectly criticized the Schroeder government's initiative to lift the EU arms embargo against China ("China is threatened by no one") and cited the continuing torture of political prisoners in Tibet.

14. (SBU) The following day, twenty thousand people attended a public celebration of the Dalai Lama's 70th birthday at a park in the state capital (prominently featuring the banned Tibetan flag). In a private conversation with Consul General (at a function sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce), the Dalai Lama expressed frustration with Nepalese authorities' handling of Tibetan refugees.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) Minister-President Koch has ties to the Dalai Lama dating back two decades (and recently called on him in India). Deputy Bundestag president Antje Vollmer (Greens) - - from the opposite end of the political spectrum -- gave Koch credit for an honest and important speech. With the three-day visit, the Tibetan cause has gained enhanced visibility in Germany -- and Koch has scored points among many Germans who would not normally support a political conservative. END COMMENT.
BODDE